

TASC Program FY12 Support for Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak Executive Summary

Project Summary

The EPA Headquarters Technical Assistance for Communities (TASC) Program project regarding the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Kodiak Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) site has concluded. This project provided technical assistance to the Sun'aq Tribe and the Kodiak Alaskan Native Community in understanding the current information about environmental exposure and risk related to 4 sites, and was the first TASC Program project in Alaska.

The contractor's (SKEO Solutions') activities included: independently reviewing data and reports related to contamination at three solid waste management units at the site; working with the Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak to identify subsistence activities that could be impacted by contamination in Inner Women's Bay; preparing two "culturally appropriate" fact sheets summarizing the available data and implications for tribal fish consumption; and holding one community meeting in September 2012 to discuss the findings and answer questions.

Key Findings

- Fire Training Pit: Petroleum-related chemicals were found in the Buskin River nearby and upstream of the Fire Training Pit at levels that may harm spawning salmon. There is not enough information available to fully understand the risk to fish and other wildlife at this time.
- Building A-711: Sediment samples from the Buskin River near Building A-71 had petroleum-related chemicals at levels that may harm spawning salmon. There is not enough data available to fully understand the risk to fish and other wildlife at this time.
- Former Navy Landfill: The studies showed little to no potential harm to salmon, including spawning and rearing areas.
- Inner Womens Bay: The last sediment study (1999) showed that chemicals in sediment are not likely to harm marine organisms.
- The fact sheets concluded overall that there is a need for more information on these sites, as well as on subsistence activities in the area that could be affected by contamination at the sites.

Meeting Highlights

- Tribal members expressed concern over the limited scope of the current TASC project and the need for more comprehensive evaluation of the larger geographic area. All areas are important to them and everything is connected.
- Tribal members emphasized their need to protect salmon in the greater Buskin River area.

- Tribal members expressed concern about historical contamination by various military agencies over a 100-year timespan. Attendees listed many areas outside the four identified sites that have existing contamination from historical practices.
- One attendee gave detailed recommendations for agency follow-up activities which would focus on agency and tribal collaboration. These included interviewing site workers with knowledge of historical waste management and operations practices, soliciting public input on the cleanup approach, and conducting a health assessment.
- Tribal members expressed concern about the over-harvesting of food sources and competing pressures from non-tribal sport and commercial fishing operations.

Recommendations from TASC

TASC recommends that agencies, the Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak and other Alaskan Natives come together to discuss a future plan for collaboration surrounding these sites. Such an effort would be valuable to the overall cleanup effort. Some related specific recommendations:

- The Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak and EPA could work to expand community engagement to more sites than just the four areas covered in this TASC project.
- The Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak could work with EPA in the planning of the sampling activity of Inner Womens Bay to take place in spring 2013.
- The Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), U.S. Navy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, EPA, and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) could collaborate to integrate historical studies and data that focus on locations and species of particular concern to Alaska Natives on Kodiak.
- The Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak, additional tribes on Kodiak, USCG, ADEC, Alaska Department of Health, EPA Region 10, and any other local stakeholders could form a Community Advisory Group.
- The Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak and other tribes in the region could continue to develop collaborative efforts to address larger areas of concern for the shared marine environment (e.g. Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak and St. George Tribe working on an ocean floor partnership).

EPA R10 Contacts

Deb Sherbina, Community Involvement Coordinator: sherbina.debra@epa.gov (206) 553-0247

Jan Palumbo, USCG Kodiak RCRA site Project Lead: palumbo.jan@epa.gov (206) 553-6702

Katherine Brown, SC Alaska Tribal Coordinator: brown.katherine@epa.gov (206) 553